

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for ordering inbound inquiries, the method comprising:

5 receiving plural inbound inquiries, each inbound inquiry having associated inquiry information;

applying one or more models to the inquiry information to determine a priority value for each inquiry; and

10 forcing inbound inquiries having a priority value of less than a predetermined amount into self service.

2. The method of Claim 1 wherein the self service comprises an automated response interaction.

15 3. The method of Claim 1 wherein the self service comprises instructions to the inquirer to try the inquiry at another time.

20 4. The method of Claim 1 wherein the self service comprises instant message communications.

5. The method of Claim 1 wherein the self service comprises e-mail communications.

25 6. The method of Claim 1 wherein the self service comprises instructions to visit an Internet site.

30 7. The method of Claim 1 wherein the inbound inquiries comprise inbound telephone calls having associated caller information.

8. The method of Claim 7 wherein the caller information comprises automatic number identification information.

5 9. The method of Claim 7 wherein the caller information comprise destination number identification information.

10 10. The method of Claim 7 further comprising:
gathering the caller information with a voice response unit.

11. The method of Claim 1 wherein one of the models predicts inquirer behavior.

15 12. The method of Claim 1 wherein the inbound inquiries comprise e-mail.

20 13. The method of Claim 1 wherein the inbound inquiries comprise instant messages.

14. The method of Claim 1 wherein the inbound inquiries comprise collaborative browsing.

25 15. The method of Claim 1 wherein the priority value comprises a probability that the inbound inquiry will result in a purchase.

30 16. The method of Claim 1 wherein the priority value comprises the predicted tolerance of an individual associated with the inbound inquiry.

17. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
developing plural models from a history of inbound
inquiries to forecast one or more outcomes that determine
the priority value.

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18. The method of Claim 17 wherein developing the
model further comprises:
applying regression analysis to the history to
calculate the priority value.

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19. The method of Claim 17 wherein developing the
model further comprises:
applying logistic regression analysis to the history
to calculate the priority value.

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20. The method of Claim 17 wherein developing the
model further comprises:
applying neural net analysis to the history to
calculate the priority value.

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21. A method for identifying inbound telephone calls for handling by self service, the method comprising:

5 developing one or more models from a history of inbound calls, the history having caller information and outcome results from inbound telephone calls;

applying the one or more models to caller information associated with a pending inbound call to predict an outcome of the pending inbound call; and

10 forcing inbound telephone calls having a predetermined predicted outcome to self service.

22. The method of Claim 21 wherein the caller information comprises telephony information received with 15 the pending inbound caller.

23. The method of Claim 21 wherein the predicted outcomes relate to the tolerance of the inbound call to a predetermined wait time.

20 24. The method of Claim 21 wherein the predicted outcomes relate to the probability of a sale to the inbound call.

25 25. The method of Claim 21 wherein the predicted outcomes relate to forecasted revenue associated with the inbound call.

30 26. The method of Claim 21 wherein the caller information further comprises information input by the caller through a voice response unit.

27. The method of Claim 21 wherein developing a model further comprises:

using the caller information as predictive variables that model outcome results.

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28. The method of Claim 27 wherein the model comprises a logistic regression model.

29. The method of Claim 27 wherein the model
10 comprises a linear regression model.

30. The method of Claim 27 wherein the model comprises a neural net model.

15 31. The method of Claim 27 wherein the model
comprises a linear regression model.

32. The method of Claim 27 wherein the model
comprises a CHAID model.

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33. The method of Claim 27 wherein the model
comprises clustering.

34. The method of Claim 21 further comprising:
25 placing pending inbound calls that are not forced
into self service into the queue of an automatic call
distribution system in an order based on the predicted
outcome of the pending inbound call.

30 35. The method of Claim 34 wherein the predicted
outcomes relate to purchase probabilities resulting from
the pending inbound call.

36. The method of Claim 21 wherein forcing inbound telephone calls having a predetermined predicted outcome to self service further comprises forcing a predetermined volume of inbound calls to self service to regulate
5 operator utilization.

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37. A system for scheduling inbound calls, the system comprising:

a receiving device operable to receive plural inbound inquiries and to provide the inbound inquiries to 5 one or more agents, the receiving device having self service and operator service; and

a scheduling module interfaced with the receiving device, the scheduling model operable to force predetermined inbound inquiries to self service handling 10 by the receiving device, the determination of self service based in part on the predicted outcome of the inbound inquiries.

38. The system of Claim 37 wherein the inbound 15 inquiries comprise inbound telephone calls.

39. The system of Claim 37 wherein the receiving device comprises an automatic call distribution system.

20 40. The system of Claim 37 wherein the receiving device comprises a server that supports voice over internet protocol.

25 41. The system of Claim 37 wherein the receiving device comprises a voice response unit.

42. The system of Claim 37 further comprising:
an inbound call history data base operable to store
outcome results and caller information from plural
completed inbound calls; and

5 a modeling module interfaced with the history database and operable to model inbound call outcomes from the stored outcome results and caller information.

43. A system for regulating caller wait times for inbound calls, the system comprising:

a telephone call receiving device interfaced with a network to receive plural inbound calls; and

5 a scheduling system associated with the receiving device and having a scheduling module that prioritizes the inbound calls in accordance with forecasted outcomes for the inbound calls;

10 wherein the scheduling system forces one or more inbound calls to self service to regulate caller wait time, the scheduling system forcing predetermined inbound calls to self service based on the forecasted outcome of the inbound call.

15 44. The system of Claim 43 wherein the telephone call receiving device comprises an automatic call distribution system that incorporates the scheduling system.

20 45. The system of Claim 43 wherein the scheduling system forecasts outcomes with models derived from a history of inbound calls.

25 46. The system of Claim 43 wherein the scheduling system orders the inbound calls to optimize an objective function.

30 47. The system of Claim 46 wherein the objective function comprises agent productivity to minimize inbound call attrition.

48. The method of Claim 47 wherein call attrition comprises abandoned calls.

49. The method of Claim 47 wherein call attrition
5 comprises account termination by the inbound inquirer.

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